

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): An image processing method for carrying out image processing on an interimage-difference image obtained by subjecting two desired images from among two or more images taken of the same subject to interimage processing and which represents [[the]]
a substantial difference between said two images, wherein

said image processing carried out on said interimage-difference image is image processing by which the substantial difference between said two images represented therein is enhanced relative to artifacts arising due to misalignment of structural positions contained within said two images.

2. (original): An image processing method as defined in claim 1, wherein
said image processing comprises suppressing said artifacts relative to the substantial difference between said two images.

3. (previously presented): An image processing method as defined in claim 2, wherein
suppression of said artifacts relative to the substantial difference between said two images comprises performance of image processing based on a morphology process utilizing structural elements larger than said artifacts and smaller than said substantial difference.

4. (original): An image processing method as defined in claim 1, wherein
said image processing comprises emphasizing the substantial difference between said two images relative to the artifacts.

5. (original): An image processing method as defined in claim 1, 2, or 4, wherein said interimage processing comprises subtraction of corresponding structural positions within said two images.
6. (original): An image processing method as defined in claim 3 wherein said interimage processing comprises subtraction of corresponding structural positions within said two images.
7. (original): An image processing method as defined in claim 1, 2, or 4, wherein said two images are radiation images taken of the same subject at different points in time in a time series manner.
8. (original): An image processing method as defined in claim 3, wherein said two images are radiation images taken of the same subject at different points in time in a time series manner.
9. (original): An image processing method as defined in claim 5, wherein said two images are radiation images taken of the same subject at different points in time in a time series manner.
10. (currently amended): An image processing apparatus including a morphological processing device for providing a morphology process, and an image processing means for performing image processing procedures on an interimage-difference image obtained by subjecting two desired images from among two or more images taken of the same subject to interimage processing and which represents the a substantial difference between said two images, wherein

said image processing means carries out image processing on said interimage-difference image, said interimage difference image subject to the morphology process in the morphological processing device, by which the substantial difference between said two images represented therein is enhanced relative to artifacts arising due to misalignment of structural positions contained within said two images.

11. (previously presented): An image processing apparatus as defined in claim 10, wherein said image processing procedure comprises suppressing said artifacts relative to the substantial difference between said two images.

12. (currently amended): An image processing apparatus as defined in claim 11, wherein said image processing procedure comprises suppressing said artifacts relative to the substantial difference between said two images by applying image processing based on [[a]] the morphology process utilizing structural elements larger than said artifacts and smaller than said substantial difference.

13. (original): An image processing apparatus as defined in claim 10, wherein said image processing procedure comprises emphasizing the substantial difference between said two images relative to the artifacts.

14. (original): An image processing apparatus as defined in claim 10, 11, 12, or 13 wherein

said interimage processing procedure comprises subtraction of corresponding structural positions within said two images.

15. (original): An image processing apparatus as defined in claim 10, 11, 12, or 13, wherein

said two images are radiation images taken of the same subject at different points in time in a time series manner.

16. (original): An image processing apparatus as defined in claim 14, wherein

said two images are radiation images taken of the same subject at different points in time in a time series manner.

17. (new). The image processing method of claim 1, wherein suppression of said artifacts comprises determining high frequency components of the interimage difference image, and subjecting the high frequency components to unsharp masking.

18. (new) The image processing method of claim 1, wherein suppression of said artifacts comprises morphological processing based on comparison of width and length of forms, wherein the artifacts comprise elongated narrow forms in comparison to wider forms of the substantial difference.

19. (new). The image processing of claim 1, wherein at least one of the images of the same subject is subject to warping before being subject to the image processing.